

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 0439

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, BQG
SUBJECT: NATIONAL STIFTUNG

REF: BONN 3012

SUMMARY. MAYOR STOBBE HAS EXPOUNDED TO THE COMMANDANTS THE SOLUTION TO THE NATIONAL STIFTUNG QUESTION WHICH THE FRG PROPOSED TO THE BONN GROUP ON FEBRUARY 14. WE ARE IN FAVOR OF APPROVING THE PROPOSAL, AND DO NOT CONSIDER IT AFFORDS PLAUSIBLE GROUNDS FOR SOVIET COMPLAINTS. END SUMMARY.

1. AT REGULAR MEETING WITH COMMANDANTS AND MINISTERS ON FEBRUARY 22, MAYOR STOBBE OUTLINED WHAT HE HOPES WILL HAPPEN TO THE IDEA OF THE NATIONAL STIFTUNG. HE MORE OR LESS REPEATED WHAT WAS SAID IN THE BONN GROUP DISCUSSION OF FEBRUARY 14, EXCEPT THAT HE ENVISAGED FUTURE EXPENDITURES AS BEING DECIDED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. THUS THE FOUNDATION OF PRUSSIAN CULTURAL PROPERTY WOULD NOT BE THE SOLE BENEFICIARY OF ALL FUTURE
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FUNDS, BUT WOULD ONLY BE PURCHASING AGENT FOR SPECIFIC CULTURAL ACQUISITIONS OR OTHER ACTIVITIES AGREED UPON BETWEEN THE FRG AND THE LAENDER. (FYI. THIS WAS REPORTEDLY AN IDEA THOUGHT UP BY TOLTENBERG AND VOGEL, WHICH STOBBE SUPPORTED. WE HAVE ALSO NOTICED RECENT WARNINGS FROM NON-BERLIN SOURCES, E.G., THE FAZ, THAT THE PRESENT AND FUTURE FUNDS SHOULD NOT BE SWALLOWED UP FOR "BERLIN PROMOTION," BUT SHOULD BE EQUALLY AVAILABLE FOR

ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES OF OTHER LAENDER. END FYI.) STOBBE DEPLORED PRESS DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PROPOSAL AS AN "INTERIM SOLUTION." HE SAID IT WAS THE SOLUTION WHICH WOULD LAY THE PROBLEM TO REST.

2. IT DEVELOPED THAT NEITHER STOBBE NOR THE FRENCH AND BRITISH MINISTERS HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE RESULTS OF THE FEBRUARY 14 BONN GROUP MEETING. THEY EXPRESSED SOME CONFUSION AT THE ALLIED ATTITUDES REPORTED IN EMBASSY'S REFTEL.

3. WE CONFESS TO THE SAME CONFUSION AS TO THE UNANIMOUSLY NEGATIVE ALLIED REACTIONS TO WHAT TO US SEEMS A GOOD WAY OF GETTING RID OF THE PROBLEM AFTER FIVE YEARS OF AN UN-DIGNIFIED AND HIGHLY PUBLICIZED TUG OF WAR. WE SIMPLY SEE NO GROUNDS OF SOVIET COMPLAINT SUFFICIENTLY PLAUSIBLE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

(A) THE SOLUTION AMOUNTS TO THE EXTINGUISHMENT OF THE IDEA OF A NATIONAL STIFTUNG.

(B) THE FUNDS WILL JUST BE FUNDS, AND IT SEEMS FAR FETCHED TO POSTULATE ANY PARTICULAR UNACCEPTABILITY OF ADDING ONE BATCH OF FEDERAL MONEY (MAYBE AS A ONE-TIME MATTER THE ENTIRE ACCUMULATED DM 37.5 MILLION) TO ANOTHER. THE PRUSSIAN FOUNDATIONS'S PRESENT BUDGET IS AROUND DM 150 MILLION.

(C) INDICATIONS ARE THAT NOT ALL THE FUNDS WOULD GO TO THE FOUNDATION.

(D) EVEN THE HIRING OF A FEW NEW EMPLOYEES TO ADD TO A STAFF WHICH IS PROBABLY CLOSE TO A THOUSAND DOES NOT SEEM CONTROVERSIAL. CONFIDENTIAL

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4. IF THESE ASSUMPTIONS ARE CORRECT IT IS HARD TO SEE WHAT THE SOVIETS COULD PROTEST ABOUT. AS NOTED IN REFTEL, THEY MIGHT EVEN TAKE POINT 3(A) AS A VICTORY FOR THEIR PAST ADMONITIONS. AT ANY RATE, IF THEY COMPLAINED TO US, WE WOULD SIMPLY REJECT THEIR REMARKS BY POINTING OUT THAT THERE IS NO NATIONAL STIFTUNG.

5. OBVIOUSLY THE ALLIES WILL WANT TO LEARN AS MANY DETAILS AS POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT THE FOREGOING IS ACCURATE. ANY ATTEMPT TO SMUGGLE THE MUMMY OF THE NATIONAL STIFTUNG INTO THE PRUSSIAN FONDATION, E.G., BY ESTABLISHING A NEW OFFICE WITH ONE OF CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S "BRASS PLATES" DESCRIBING THE STAFF ADDITIONS AS WORKING FOR THE STIFTUNG, WOULD JUSTIFY WESTERN DOUBTS.

6. FAILING SOMETHING LIKE THIS, HOWEVER, THE MISSION CONSIDERS THAT THE PROPOSED SOLUTION, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, IS NOT ONLY ACCEPTABLE BUT DESIRABLE IN ORDER TO TERMINATE THIS CONTROVERSY, AND WE ACCORDINGLY RECOMMEND THAT IT BE SURPPORTED. GEORGE

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